

Reprinted from **The Annals** of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,
Philadelphia, January, 1921.
Publication No. 1490.

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Is the Japanese Menace in America a Reality?

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IN recent years, and particularly during the past twelve months, a very great deal has been said concerning a Japanese menace in America. Does such a menace in fact exist? To find the answer to this question will be

the object of the discussion that is to follow.

First of all, it must be fully recognized that there is a real distinction between the Japanese question in the Far East and the Japanese question in

America; and that the latter, being entirely domestic, is wholly separate from and independent of the former. Comment on the alleged militaristic and bureaucratic form of government of Japan and discussions of Japan's policy toward China and Korea, the Shantung and Siberian questions and the Korean problem, should by no means include, as being in any way related to, the Japanese question in America. It is regrettable, therefore, to observe that the anti-Japanese propagandists have deliberately intermingled the Far Eastern question with the domestic one, with resultant confusion and misunderstanding. However, the student and the statesman appreciate that as these two questions are separate and distinct in magnitude and significance, each must be approached with a different attitude and met with a different policy of solution; for the Japanese in America have begun to develop a distinct social consciousness, and have commenced to solve their problems here with the aid of the American people and in conformity with American spirit and ideals.

Recognition of the Japanese problem socially and politically began in America about the year 1900. The typical attitude of that day finds expression in the retiring message of Governor Gage of California, which gave warning of an incoming of Japanese immigrants who were similar in the quality of inferiority with the Chinese, and who maintained the same low standards of wages and living. But that attitude soon changed, and with Japan's successful emergence from the war with Russia, America commenced to recognize the different and superior qualities of the Japanese as compared to the Chinese. President Roosevelt, in a message to Congress, made special mention of this matter, and although he

by no means favored a rapid mingling of the American and Japanese races, he remarked the advantages that might accrue from mutual contact and friendly relations.

Thus, the attitude toward the Japanese has changed with the passing of time, and since the new outburst of anti-Japanese agitation, and particularly since early in 1919, a new position has been taken, namely, that the Japanese are unassimilable, and hence, undesirable, despite their generally admitted good qualities. Thus we find a lack of rationality in anti-Japanese criticism because of the radically different and contradictory arguments that have been advanced. This changing and contradictory tendency to a considerable extent reflects the superficialness and weakness of the argument and attitude of the anti-Japanese agitators who, in their capriciousness and to influence the indifferent and uninformed public, have used different arguments at different times and for different occasions. For ulterior purposes which, being usually political, have been designed to advance their own personal selfish ends, these individuals have sought to prejudice the public against the Japanese. Such being true, it is vitally important that the arguments of anti-Japanese propagandists be carefully examined; and for the sincere student of the Japanese question a scientific consideration of all the facts must precede any final conclusions. In the following statement, for the benefit of those who are honestly interested in the Japanese question, I shall endeavor to present the true facts and treat them in a scientific manner.

For the purpose of discovering what the actual degree of the so-called menace may be I will treat of the population, birth-rate and economic activities of the Japanese in this

country; and as two-thirds of all the Japanese in continental America live in California, I will use California facts and statistics as typical of the whole situation.

JAPANESE POPULATION

In an attempt to prove that in the Japanese population there is ground for alarm, much eloquence, great exaggeration and ridiculous miscalculation has been indulged in, but when the subject receives the careful analysis that is its due, nothing is found to occasion alarm. The census of 1910 gives the Japanese population of California as 41,356, and according to the census of 1920, it is now 70,196, an increase of about sixty-five per cent. Meanwhile, the total population of the state has increased about fifty per cent, or from 2,250,000, approximately, in 1910, to 3,426,000 in 1920. It is true that the California State Board of Control has estimated the present Japanese population of the state as 87,279, but this is admittedly only an estimate, while the figures of the Census Bureau are based upon actual and accurate enumeration and must, necessarily, be accepted as official. However, even admitting the estimate of the Board of Control to be correct, the increase of Japanese population in California is in no sense alarming for, with no abnormal influences at play, the total state population has increased, as we have seen, approximately fifty per cent during the same period. Upon the other hand we find that abnormal conditions prevailed among the Japanese in 1910, for at that time men above the age of maturity greatly predominated, and women and children were comparatively few in number, the actual figures showing that the men were more than five times as numerous as the women. Since then, and up to the year 1919, approximately

13,000 women have been added, so that only today is the Japanese population approaching a normal condition. In other words, the increase in population since 1910 has been due principally to the increase of wives, hence, of children. With Japanese population approaching a normal state, and with the strict observance of the "Gentlemen's Agreement," which practically bars any increase through new arrivals, growth of Japanese population will be slight and will furnish no just ground for fear.

BIRTH-RATE

The high birth-rate among the Japanese in California has furnished one of the main arguments of the anti-Japanese agitators. Mr. V. S. McClatchy, for example, has by foolishly conceived figures sought to show that a continuance of the present birth-rate will mean that in the near future the Japanese in California will outnumber the whites. Such arguments, being almost wholly imaginative, have no practical relation with actuality, and are designed only to appeal to the more ignorant masses by arousing fear and excitement. Necessarily, they are valueless to the scientific investigator. Even the report of the State Board of Control which shows the Japanese birth-rate to be 46.44 and that of the whites to be 16.59, respectively, per thousand population, has furnished no scientific basis for comparison. Such elementary facts as sex distribution, marital conditions, age group and age composition, intellectual status and social environment, have not been supplied; nor has there been made any comparison between the birth-rate of the Japanese and that of other immigrant races, or that obtaining among the whites of the same age group, intellectual status and financial condition. It is obvious that before

any authoritative comparison can be made the foregoing data should be assembled and carefully examined; and in this connection, the State Board of Control virtually disclaims its own comparison in the following pertinent statement:

"If it were possible to select, for more accurate comparison, those white married women who were on a social, economic and intellectual status similar to that of the Japanese, the disparity in birth-rate would undoubtedly be less marked."

But granting for the sake of argument that in the past the Japanese birth-rate has been high, there is still nothing unnatural or abnormal about it, for history of all immigration shows that the birth-rate and death-rate of every new immigrant group have at first been high, but that as prosperity and higher standards of living have come to prevail, as the immigrant group has adapted itself to the new environment and different conditions of life, the birth-rate has steadily declined. Also, nearly all immigrants come from large families and hence their first generation is biologically prolific. Furthermore, the Japanese immigration, like that of

joined by, their wives. In this connection, the statistics show that by the end of 1919 there were approximately 10,000 more Japanese women in California than there were in 1910. In other words there are now about 15,211 Japanese wives here, most of whom came here at the age of the greatest fecundity. Under these circumstances, a comparatively high birth-rate was natural and could have been avoided only by unnatural methods of birth control. And there must be considered, also, the influence of the new environment, the different physical, social and economic conditions, all of which have made for an easier life and have, therefore, tended to increase the birth-rate. Even so, it is by no means as abnormal as has been claimed, and the mendacity of the frequently repeated assertion that Japanese women in California have given birth to a child each year, on the average, is established by the following table appearing in the report of the State Board of Control.

Moreover, a high birth-rate is not a racial trait of the Japanese, and as those in this country emerge from their present status, as they are doing

Year	No. of Women	Births	Percentage of births to the total births in California	
			Japanese	Whites
1910	6,362	719	2.24	96.13
1915	10,000	3,342	6.95	91.26
1916	11,500	3,721	7.35	91.38
1917	13,500	4,108	7.87	90.59
1918	14,500	4,218	7.54	91.17
1919	15,211	4,378	7.82	90.86

all other nationalities, was at first almost wholly of men who, having pioneered in the new land and set up homes there, have sent for, and been

very rapidly, their birth-rate will undoubtedly recede to the normal. At any rate, we can not with reason or propriety judge the future by the

past; and with the productivity of the Japanese women decreasing with their increasing age, and with new arrivals practically stopped through the cessation of picture-bride immigration, it is not too much to say that in the very near future there will be a marked decline in the Japanese birth-rate.

AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES OF THE JAPANESE

The agricultural activities of the Japanese have been widely commented upon and made the basis of an effort to prove that farm land in California is rapidly passing into Japanese ownership or control. The actual facts in this regard are particularly illuminating, serving as they do to refute another of the favorite accusations of the anti-Japanese agitators. The total land area of California amounts to 98,000,000 acres, of which 28,000,000 is farm land. Of this, the Japanese own or are buying on contract, individually and through American-Japanese corporations, 74,769 acres, and lease, or operate under crop contracts, 383,287 acres. Thus it appears that the total farm land *occupied* by the Japanese is no more than 1.6 per cent of the total, and that the amount *owned* by them and, hence, *controlled*, is less than one-third of one per cent of the vast farm land area of the state, relatively nothing more than a mere handful. As to the character of the farm land owned by the Japanese, without going into detail, suffice it to say that it is rich and productive—as has been charged—but that it has been made so by the incessant toil of the Japanese who, in most instances, took land either abandoned or regarded as practically useless by others, and made it highly productive.

ASSIMILATION AND THE INNER QUALITIES OF THE JAPANESE

In bringing this discussion to a

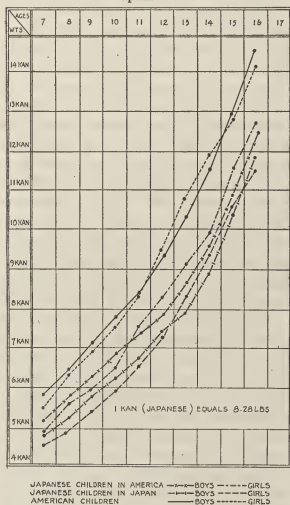
consideration of the social and inner qualities of the Japanese in America, we come to the most important phase of the Japanese problem, namely, the question of assimilation. The allegation that the Japanese are non-assimilable is the central argument of all of the anti-Japanese propagandists; it is, in truth, almost their sole gospel. Nevertheless, they have never yet even explained what it is that they mean by assimilation, nor have they given reasons for their assertions. Even Governor William D. Stephens, of California, in a recent public letter was content to speak of the "ethnological impossibility of assimilating the Japanese people," without giving any reasons to support such a contention.

Assimilation may be defined, for practical purposes and without much emphasis upon its dogmatic phases, as that art or process by which one is brought into a resemblance, harmony, conformity or identity with regard to others. More specifically to our case, it means adjustment to the new conditions and adaptation to the social, political, industrial and cultural institutions, both traditional and actual, of America. If this is what assimilation really implies, then the whole question boils itself down to how far and to what degree the Japanese have been and can be assimilated. Indeed, nothing final can be said on the question for it is one of relativity not of absolutism and a perfect assimilation can only be measured by Father Time.

PHYSICAL ASSIMILATION

The whole question of assimilation naturally divides into two phases, namely, physical and cultural. The physical assimilation of any race is difficult to measure or to definitely determine, but the fallacy of such an assertion as that "the Creator made the two races different, and different

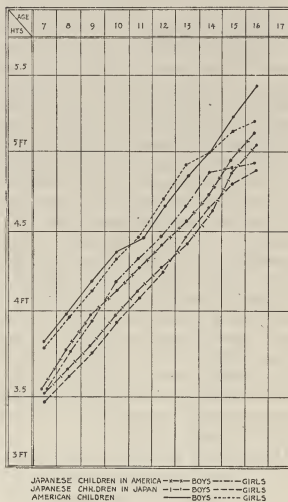
Japanese Children in Japan and America
Comparative Study of Weights Between the
Children of American Born Japanese and Jap-
anese Children in Japan.



they will remain," has been convincingly demonstrated even by the Immigration Commission. It is now fully recognized that the social, economic and political conditions of America have gradually changed the habits, living customs and modes of thought of the European immigrants who thus become Americans. Even physical changes affecting height, weight, the cephalic index, color of hair, etc., have been definitely established. These changes now are taking place also among the Japanese immigrants. Their hair, formerly jet black, is toning toward the brown and their skin is losing its darker pigment, while in stature and weight there has been a marked proportional gain; and al-

though there has been no such careful study as would permit of announcing a final conclusion, certainly it can be positively stated that such racial differences as exist between the Japanese and the whites, even if they do tend to discourage a rapid amalgamation, by no means prevent even physical assimilation, and that in this connection the Japanese immigrants are in no different position from all other immigrants. The charts here shown, based upon and comprising figures obtained from the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor, the Japanese Educational Association of America, and the Educational Department of the city of Tokio, Japan,

Japanese Children in Japan and America
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serve to graphically portray the physical changes taking place in the Japanese in America.

CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

As to the cultural assimilation of the Japanese in America the results are more thoroughly apparent. For instance, take the American-born Japanese children. They speak English almost entirely, and in their customs, spirit and mode of thought are far more American than Japanese. They have little desire even to visit Japan, for America is indeed "home" to them, and their love for America and adherence to its ideals is established by the eagerness with which they have joined and are joining the Boy Scouts of America and kindred organizations.

During the Great War the American-born Japanese young men of the requisite age admirably demonstrated that through them runs a devout love for the stars and stripes and America. Highly encouraging results are found also among the adult Japanese residents, who, by their ideas—social, economic, political and cultural—have demonstrated their complete conversion to the American ideal. No better proof of this can be found than the almost unvarying tendency of those who go to Japan to soon become dissatisfied there and return to America, and of the firm determination of almost all of the parents to educate their children in America as Americans, useful for America's future. Again, their mode of living, their ideas, in fact their entire philosophy, are being Americanized so profoundly that they find no difficulty in performing their new civic duties and conforming to the American legal system. Their devotion to America is further evidenced by the willingness, yes the eagerness, with which they bought their full quota of liberty bonds, war savings stamps,

etc., and made their generous contributions to the Red Cross and other war charities. The Japanese are also rapidly conforming to the spiritual ideals of America for, except in rare instances, the observance of Sunday is part of their life, and their homes and home customs are rapidly improving.

The foregoing short survey furnishes generous proof of cultural assimilability, and that the Japanese are racially as assimilable as any other people is abundantly evidenced by the rapidity with which Japan has adopted and adapted herself to modern Western civilization. Asserting that the Japanese are assimilable, that, indeed, they have proved it, we must explain why the process of assimilation has been so slow. With no desire to deny fault on our own part, it nevertheless must be stated that the main reason for the slowness of the process is to be found in the barriers that prejudice and intolerance have set up against the Japanese. Social discrimination, such as excluding Japanese from certain residential districts; legal discrimination, such as the various land laws and the denial of the privilege of citizenship; the inhibition of intermarriage,—all these are barriers that certainly most seriously retard the process of assimilation, and unless they are dissipated and the doctrine of exact equality is established, the whole question of assimilation will be difficult of permanent solution. That the Japanese are not really an undesirable people, that they are in truth worthy to be assimilated finds indisputable proof in the very statements of the anti-Japanese agitators who preface their adverse arguments by admitting freely that the Japanese are sober, orderly, peaceful, industrious and enterprising, and in no way inferior to the Caucasian race. Are these not desirable qualities? Are they not those things which

are commonly called virtues? And, admittedly possessing these characteristics, are not the Japanese wholly worthy of being assimilated? Then why not take a positive step in this direction? Why not make them a desirable integral part of American life and transform them into a valuable asset instead of permitting mistreatment and discrimination to make of them a liability to themselves and to the whole American people? Let rationalism rather than foolish sentimentalism rule.

INTERMARRIAGE

In considering the important question of intermarriage it is well to emphasize that, though closely related, it is not an absolute condition of assimilation. Beyond doubt there is intimate relationship between them, but that assimilation is entirely possible without intermarriage is fully evidenced by the Japanese students in America. The physical and mental characteristics of the progeny resultant of intermarriage shows the complete biological possibility of it; in fact the results are in no way dissimilar to those occurring from the ordinary inter-racial marriage. On the whole, however, the question of marriage between Americans and Japanese is one largely of the attitude of the people directly concerned, and through social expediency it will gradually solve itself.

WORKING HOURS AND WAGES

That the Japanese are willing to work longer hours and accept lower wages than the whites is by no means a true statement. Figures gathered in twenty-two counties show that while in some instances the Japanese accept a lower wage, in others they demand a higher one, and that the general average of the hour and wage scale is practically the same between

the Japanese and the whites performing the same kind of work. In this regard there is often a failure to distinguish between Japanese farm hands, and Japanese who own their own farms and who, like many American farmers, work as long hours as they desire.

STANDARD OF LIVING

The Japanese standard of living, although it may have been low in the past on account of economic conditions, is not generally so today. As the Japanese in America have prospered they have steadily raised their standard of living, for their natural tendency is to enjoy life as much as possible, and a low living standard is not a racial trait. In other words, the standard of living is directly connected with the earning power of the Japanese, and as the latter increases, the former rises proportionately, and compares more than favorably at all times with the standard prevailing among other immigrant groups. With the dissipation of prejudices and the removal of restrictive and discriminatory environmental barriers, the Japanese standard of living will rise until it equals that obtaining among average Americans. In any event the question must be measured relatively, not positively, and to deal justly with it, comparisons, if any, should be made with the new immigrant groups and not with the higher developed and more refined peoples.

JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

The Japanese language schools have occasioned a great deal of misunderstanding and aroused much adverse criticism: misunderstanding has arisen because the public has not known their purpose; and adverse criticism, because the agitators have claimed that such institutions teach only Japanese ideas and customs, and loyalty to the Empire of Japan. The real purpose of

these schools, however, is to teach the Japanese language to children who show a marked preference for and adaptability toward English, in order that the connecting tie between the parents (who naturally have difficulty in speaking and understanding English) and the children may not be destroyed. Sever this tie, and the parent must suffer, for it is mainly through the child that he becomes acquainted with and agreeable to the customs and institutions of American life. It is upon this basic idea that the Japanese language schools exist. The fact that many of them employ American teachers for the smaller children and that they are revising their text-books to conform to American principles furnishes proof that their teaching and precepts are not other than loyal to America, and evidences the fact that these schools, far from being a bar, are of genuine aid to the process of Americanization. The average attitude of the Japanese parent is to so bring up his children that they will make the best of American citizens, participating in American life and contributing their distinct share to this cosmopolitan civilization.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING

The religious training of the Japanese is not being neglected, and in this there is a well-recognized tendency toward the Christian religion, Buddhism being rapidly on the wane among the second generation, particularly. There are only twenty-five Buddhist Temples in all of continental America, while on the Pacific Coast, exclusive of Canada, there are sixty-one Protestant Japanese churches, besides a number of Catholic churches, and all of them are gaining in membership and strength. Also, few of the Japanese born here accept other than the Christian faith.

THE JAPANESE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

An organization that is devoted to raising all of the standards of the Japanese in this country and of genuinely aiding Americanization is the Japanese Association of America with headquarters at San Francisco, which has been in existence since 1900. It has a membership of 16,000 Japanese, all of whom recognize and approve the principles and purposes of the organization. It has taken the lead in all movements designed to promote a better understanding between the Americans and the Japanese here, and to inculcate in the hearts and minds of the latter a devotion to and an understanding of the spirit of America.

IMMIGRATION

The question of Japanese immigration is one that should be considered carefully, but not confused with questions which concern the treatment and the Americanization of the Japanese already here. With picture brides barred and the practice of yoshi adoption discontinued, and with the "Gentlemen's Agreement" functioning satisfactorily, Japanese immigration is really nothing to worry over. The increase of the Japanese, through immigration, since the adoption of the "Gentlemen's Agreement," has been slight and due, even then, to the abnormal condition of the Japanese community. With conditions in that respect rapidly approaching the normal, there is no occasion for alarm. Even so, the Japanese people and the Japanese Government are willing to make honest and reasonable concessions to the end that the immigration problem may be solved.

In concluding, let me say that if we study the question of the Japanese in America along the lines of this discussion, the actual situation will not be

found to constitute a menace of any kind to America; and, moreover, on account of careful regulation of immigration, there is no possibility of a menace ever arising.

In spite of the criticisms of the anti-Japanese agitators, and the prejudices thereby aroused, the Japanese in America, heeding the teachings of their leaders, are most sincerely endeavoring to so order their lives as to conform to the economic, social and spiritual ideas and institutions of America. Therefore, the real and fundamental problem is how to make the Japanese already here an integral part of American society. In this regard, the attitude and program of the anti-Japanese agitators would furnish nothing that would work to the ultimate good of the commonwealth. Instead of such agitation, America should meet the problem with an attitude predicated on the policy of how to Americanize and assimilate the Japanese that are here, so that they may not be left as a foreign and isolated group in America.

This, of course, means granting to those who are qualified the rights and privileges of American citizenship.

THE SOLUTION

In suggesting a solution we must distinguish between the question of future immigration and the matter of the treatment of the Japanese now here. As to immigration, it may be advisable to impose further restrictions either by revising the "Gentlemen's Agreement" or adopting some method similar in principle to the Gulick plan; or the whole matter might be left to the action of a Joint High Commission. But whatever the method, it should be frank and friendly and free from discrimination. As to solving the question that particularly concerns the Japanese now here, that can only be done, as I have already stated, by granting to those thoroughly qualified therefor, by virtue of length of residence, character and education, the full rights of American citizenship.

